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IMAGES OF EXCELLENCE

Photographs from the
George Eastman House Collection



October 5 - November 16, 1986

THE TOLEDO MUSEUM OF ART

Monroe Street at Scottwood Avenue, Toledo
Tuesday - Saturday 9 am - 5 pm • Sunday 1 pm - 5 pm

The Toledo Museum of Art
Timeframes
PHOTOGRAPHY: PAST AND PRESENT

A series of programs on the art of photography
in conjunction with the exhibition

*Images of Excellence: Photography from the
George Eastman House Collection*
October 5-November 16, 1986

Sunday, October 12

*2 p.m., Public Tour of the Exhibition

3 p.m., Lecture

**THOUGHTS ON A COLLECTION OF
PHOTOGRAPHS**

Robert Sobieszek

Director of Photographic Collections

International Museum of Photography at
George Eastman House, Rochester, New York

Co-sponsored by the Toledo Friends of Photography
with assistance from the Arts Commission of Greater
Toledo

Sunday, October 19

3 p.m., Lecture

EARLY AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY

William Stapp

Curator of Photographs

National Portrait Gallery, Washington, D.C.

Sunday, October 26

*2 p.m., Public Tour of the Exhibition

3 p.m., Lecture

UNDER THE INFLUENCE:

PHOTOGRAPHY AND ART IN THE 1980s

Andy Grundberg

Photography Critic

The New York Times

Sunday, November 2

*2 p.m., Public Tour of the Exhibition

3 p.m., Lecture

**INFORMAL NOTES ON THE POETRY OF
EXPERIENCE**

Emmet Gowin

Photographer, Visual Arts Program Faculty
Princeton University

Sunday, November 9

1:30 p.m., Film

PHOTOGRAPHERS OF THE AMERICAN FRONTIER

*2 p.m., Public Tour of the Exhibition

Sunday, November 16

*2 p.m., Public Tour of the Exhibition

*Exhibition admission:

Admission to the Museum is always free. There will be an admission charge for the exhibition every day except Wednesday, which is a free day. There are no advanced ticket sales.

\$3 Adults (18-64)

\$2 Senior Citizens (65 years and older);
students (6-17)

Free Toledo Museum of Art Members and
Reciprocal Members
Children (age 5 or under)
University of Toledo students
accompanied by their instructors

TIMEFRAMES REGISTRATION

Series Tickets: Members \$18; Non-members \$22

Single Tickets: Members \$4; Non-members \$4.50

CATALOGUE

A fully illustrated book, *MASTERPIECES OF PHOTOGRAPHY: FROM THE GEORGE EASTMAN HOUSE COLLECTION*, is available for \$90.00. Other books on photography are also available at the Museum Bookstore.

MUSEUM HOURS

Tuesday-Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.

Sunday, 1 p.m.-5 p.m.

Closed Monday and major holidays

THE MUSEUM CAFE

Tuesday-Saturday 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

This exhibition, organized and circulated by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, was made possible by a grant from the IBM Corporation, with additional funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The Toledo showing of this exhibition has been supported in part by a grant from the Ohio Arts Council.

The history of photography is a complex weave of many threads. There is no single definition of the medium, nor a single quality which identifies its observable characteristics. While the basis of all photographic processes is sensitivity to light, this fact alone does little to describe or identify either the quality of the photographic picture or its purpose. Since the first photographs were made in Europe in the 1830s, the medium has become the most fundamental of modern society. It is not an exaggeration to state that our understanding of the modern world is based not so much on experience as on what may be termed the virtual experience of photographic images.

The spirit which gave rise to the invention of photography was a desire to reproduce and preserve images of the significant works of the past and present. With the freedom of photography, however, simple image reproduction was replaced by a more problematic concern: if truth and accuracy were criteria of excellence in the pictorial arts, did this then make photography some form of art? Controversy over this question continued throughout the nineteenth century with the British and French taking the most affirmative view toward photography's aesthetic and pictorial merit.

Today, with our broader understanding, we can see that this argument about artistic status or character was too narrow and only of passing concern, and that photography has become a medium of fundamental communication that cuts across all areas of endeavor—of art, science, record keeping, propaganda and private memorabilia, among many others.

Although accumulation of images, reflecting primarily their documentary content, is the province of libraries and archives, the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, as a museum, concentrates more fully on demonstrating photography's own development and on major pho-



Henri Cartier-Bresson *Hyères, France*, gelatin silver print, 1932

tographers, recognizing that photographs, like all human creations, reflect their makers. Thus the Eastman House collection is organized first as a collection of proper names—Daguerre, Nadar, O'Sullivan, Cameron, Man Ray and Lange. Its curators select what they believe to be the finest example of a photographer's work. That is, they seek the unique expression of the photographer's act and, in so doing, consider matters of craft and expression.

The photographic craft is always changing. This is brought on through the refinement of the photographer's taste and style, as well as through manufacturers' alterations of materials and apparatus. In this exhibition, the Eastman House presents a history of the medium which is dual in nature: on the one hand, this is a panoramic survey of major international photographers, each represented by one outstanding work, and on the other, a panorama of

processes, camera technologies and the cultural values of the modern era as represented in subject choices. Thus one notes both the differences and similarities in portraiture between Carjat in 1861 and Steichen in 1928, between a still life by Currey of 1865 and one by Schrager of 1978, a landscape by Clausel of 1856 and one by Minor White of 1952, an architectural view by Baldus of 1856 and one by Sheeler of 1914. Some themes or ideas have not changed as dramatically as expected. Compare, for example, Charnay's view of Chichen Itza or Du Camp's Amenhotep III in the nineteenth century to Gowin's 1981 view of Mt. St. Helens, or to NASA's image of the Jupiter satellite, Io, made in the same year. While these latter pictures are literally worlds apart in their concerns, they are both in the tradition of capturing the exotic—the places and cultures far removed from the viewer's experience.

The so-called art photograph is strongly represented in the Eastman House collection. Indeed, as the twentieth century developed, it was a widespread acceptance of the creative potential of the photographer which propelled the medium forward and which captured the interest of a public seeking the rewards of what many considered photography to be—*the modern art form*. Henry Peach Robinson's *Fading Away*, an influential and serious art composition of the late 1850s, is not only a characteristic Romantic picture but is also one of latent social import. In its choice of subject there is a reflection of the reality felt by the middle class in industrialized Britain about the appalling mortality of infants and youth. As the dictates of artistic representation became more abstract and less depictive, so too did the photographers adopt new visual forms. Alvin Langdon Coburn's 1917 portrait of Ezra Pound is a pioneering and masterly example of the new vision. The poet and leader of the British Vorticist, or modern art, movement is not pictured as much as he is symbolized, with his profile apprehended within interpenetrating angular shapes and planes. Moholy-Nagy's 1927 collage construction arises directly out of the mainstream of the German post-World War I movements, and Aaron Siskind's 1957 interpretation of a Martha's Vineyard wall is as abstract and emotionally charged with the weight of psychological and moral force as any work by his contemporaries in painting such as Franz Kline or Willem de Kooning.

Perhaps the most meaningful accomplishment of twentieth century camera technology has been the development of the sophisticated miniature apparatus which, since 1925, has allowed the photographer to become a participant in everyday life and thus to depict and comment on the passage of our once private existence. An early master of this mode is Henri Cartier-Bresson, whose 1932 image taken in Hyères brings us close up to share the elegant and unconscious rhythm of human action. Later, Eddie Adams took us into combat in Vietnam and Bruce Davidson entered the life of teenagers who found a cautious refuge at Coney Island.

In recent years the techniques of direct color photography have caused an increase in the apparent

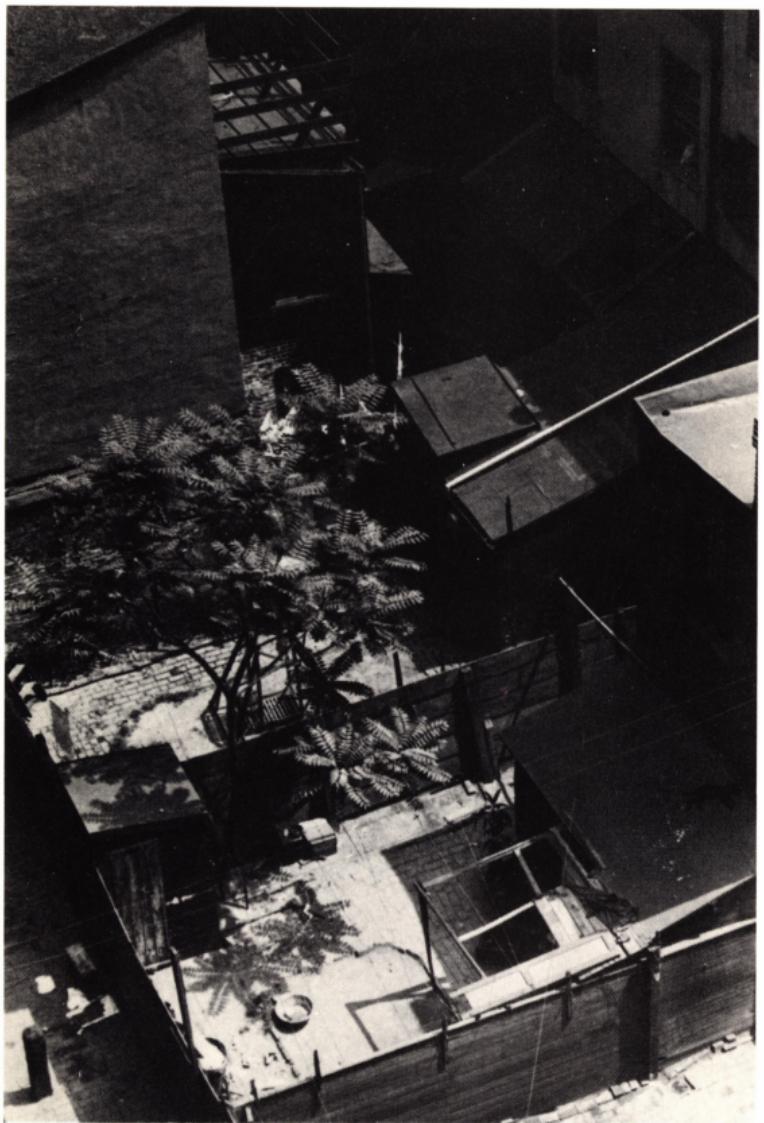
realism of photographs, challenging the once fundamental abstraction of black and white imagery and encouraging a new generation of photographers to work exclusively with color. One need only compare the quality of color rendition between the Anton Bruehl portrait of 1937 and the Stephen Shore landscape of 1974 to understand the vast improvements in color fidelity. However, Eliot Porter's work with the American landscape shows just how manipulative and personally interpretive color photography can be.

George Eastman House

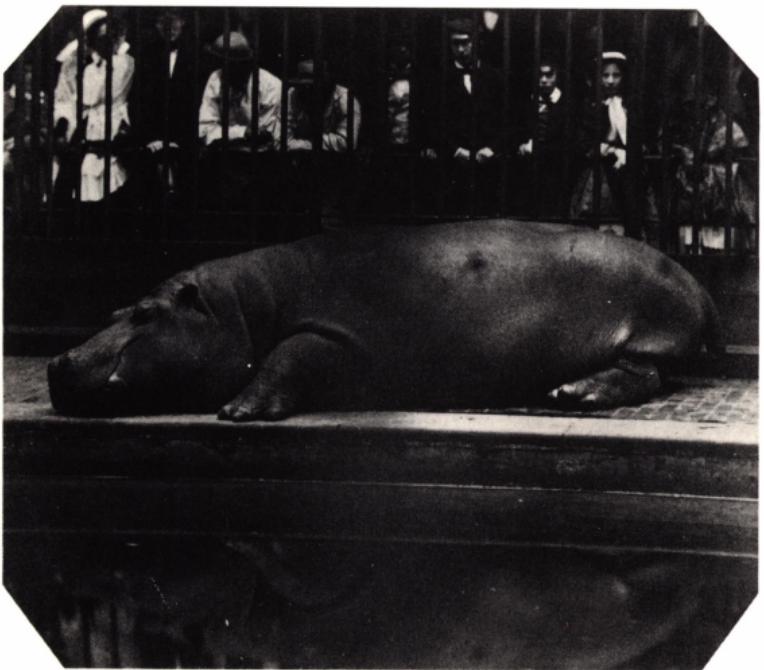
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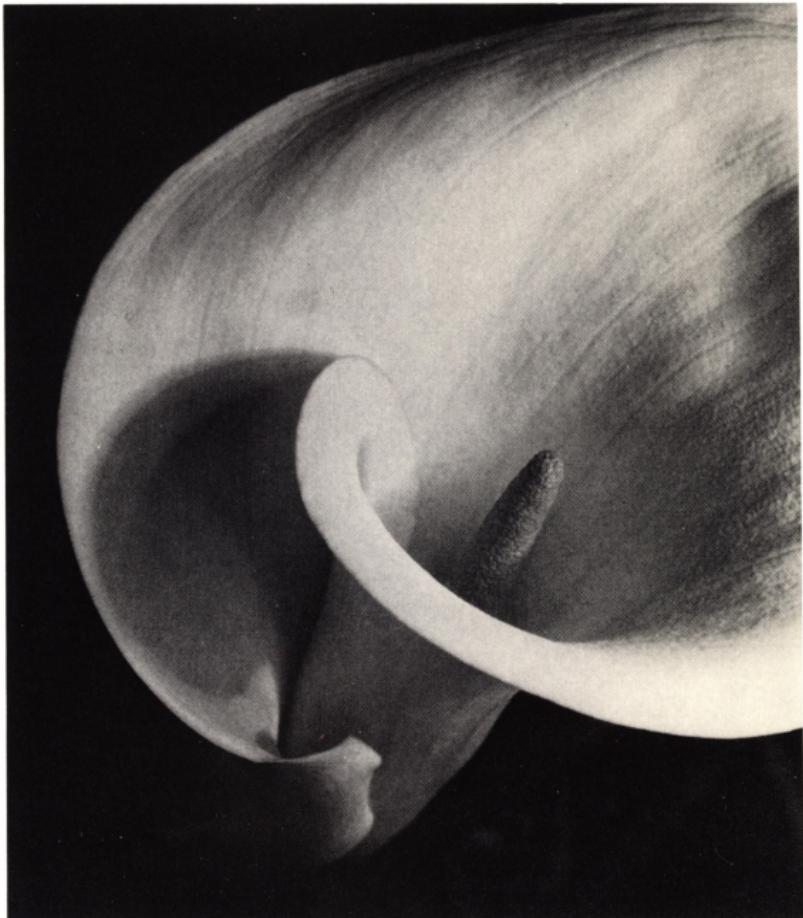
Museum of Photography at George Eastman House in Rochester, New York, was founded in 1947 through the corporate benefaction of the Eastman Kodak Company. Its collection of photographs and photographic apparatus is unquestionably the finest in the world. The first curator was the eminent historian, Beaumont Newhall, author of the basic text *The History of Photography*, published in 1938 and since revised several times. The formerly private holdings of Gabriel Cromer and Alden Scott Boyer formed the basis of the collection. Since these early acquisitions, the collection has steadily increased in size and stature and it now numbers over 500,000 photographs. This exhibition is the first of its kind to be organized by the museum, and it is also the first time that many of these especially rare and significant photographic images have been shown outside of Rochester.



Morton Schamberg, (city rooftops), gelatin silver print, 1916



Count de Montizon, *Hippopotamus*, albumen print, ca. 1854



Imogen Cunningham, *Calla*, gelatin silver print, 1929



Maxime Du Camp, *Gourah, Monolithic Colossus of Amenhotep III*
salted paper print (printed by Blanquart-Evrard) 1852



Edward Henry Weston, *Ruth Shaw*, gelatin silver print, 1922

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for Creative Photography



Edward Steichen, *Greta Garbo*, gelatin silver print, 1928

Bequest of Edward Steichen by direction of Joanna T. Steichen



Emmet Gowin, *Toutle River Valley, Mt. St. Helens*, split toned gelatin silver print, 1981/1983, Copyright Emmet Gowin, 1983



Henry Peach Robinson, *Fading Away*, albumen print, combination print from five negatives, 1858

This exhibition, organized by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, is made possible by a grant from the IBM Corporation. Additional support is provided by the National Endowment for the Arts and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

Museum information: (419) 255-8000.
For tour information and reservations, contact the Museum Scheduler.